

***NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE INSTRUCTION 31-104-02
JANUARY 5, 2004***

***Financial Management and Budget
Travel***

GROUP TRAVEL ANNUAL PLANS AND PROCEDURES

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:

Signed _____
[Approving Authority name] Date
[Approving Authority title]

MEMORANDUM FOR: Regional Administrators
Science Directors
Office Directors
Deputies and Travel Contacts

FROM: John Oliver
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations

SUBJECT: Group Travel Annual Plans and Procedures (Action by Jan. 23, 2004)

NOAA's existing travel regulations require that the Under Secretary approve domestic travel (within the 48 states) by groups of 20 or more and foreign travel (including Alaska and Hawaii) by groups of 10 or more. To plan and expedite approval for group travel requests by NOAA this memo requests annual group travel plans (foreign and domestic). In addition, this memo identifies the required procedures and guidance for requesting group travel.

For NOAA Fisheries to meet NOAA's requirements we need to develop an annual plan (January 1-December 31, 2004) of anticipated group travel events. Submitting complete plans is important to facilitating approval of group requests. Group travel requests that are part of an annual plan generally receive approval without additional scrutiny. Therefore, each of the Headquarters Program Offices and each FMC is required to submit an annual plan for domestic and foreign group travel by January 23, 2004.

Attached is a sample excel format to be used when preparing your annual plan -- please use this format. It is available electronically at: (<http://home.nmfs.noaa.gov/mb/travel/default.htm>). You must list external and internal meetings, staff meetings, training classes, workshops and so on, which will require the travel of 20 or more NOAA Fisheries funded travelers domestically, or 10 NOAA Fisheries funded travelers internationally (including Alaska and Hawaii). Please note that the Office Directors along with the FMC Directors need to be cognizant of travel that may reach the threshold for group travel when considering Agency-wide participation. In these circumstances, the Directors need to identify a programmatic lead/coordinator for the event. Please try to include as part your group travel plan, travel that may reach the threshold required for approval when considering travel by other components of NOAA Fisheries. The Office of Management and Budget will compile these events into the overall plan. Your plan is due to Ann Kebeck, F/MB, by **January 23, 2004**.

As in the past, you are required to submit all requests for group travel, even when identified in your annual plan to NOAA Fisheries according to the procedures and requirements as outlined below:

1. Group travel requests must be submitted to F/MB via Ann Kebeck at least three weeks before the scheduled start date of the event. Request for group travel with less than three weeks before the event will not be considered for processing unless accompanied by a justification letter from the FMC or Headquarters Office Deputy. Once NOAA level approval is received, F/MB will not seek additional approval for group travel.
2. Where possible, identify a NOAA Fisheries contact (trip coordinator) for each group event. F/MB will coordinate meetings with widespread participation across the agency when there is no clear trip coordinator or lead office.
3. The name, date, location, duration, and objective of the event; names of proposed participants (including invitational travel), a justification for each traveler, and estimated cost of the event must be provided to Ann Kebeck, F/MB. Each person selected to attend group travel events, particularly international travel, should have a clearly articulated purpose and goal for attending the event.
4. It should be noted that NOAA does not view the acceptance of papers or presentations at conference as sole justification for participating in group travel event (i.e., being on the schedule/agenda for a meeting prior to approval does not preclude denial of a travel request). The best way to address this is to identify travel in the annual plan and/or submit group travel requests as soon as possible.
5. Quarterly reports reflecting group travel for the Agency will be submitted to the Deputy Under Secretary. These reports will be the responsibility of F/MB, and summarize dates of travel, number of travelers, and costs.
6. F/MB's travel office and I will work with NOAA and the appropriate Headquarters Office and FMC to try and resolve any travel requests, or portions of requests, that are denied by NOAA.

If you have any questions, please contact Ann Kebeck or Brian Pawlak (301) 713-1364.

Attachment

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